

PATENT ABSTRACTS OF JAPAN

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(21)Application number : 10-102350 (71)Applicant : MATSUSHITA ELECTRIC
IND CO LTD

(22)Date of filing : 14.04.1998 (72)Inventor : IGA YOSHITERU
MIZUNO KENJI
KUDO EIICHI

(54) ELECTROLYTE FILLING METHOD AND DEVICE FOR BATTERY

(57)Abstract:

PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED: To efficiently fill an electrolyte into a rectangular battery case within a short time by a simple device and to prevent the scattering of the electrolyte around the filling port of a battery.

SOLUTION: An electrolyte is filled applying centrifugal force to the electrolyte under the conditions where inside pressure of a battery case 30 is reduced. Filling is started with only a weak centrifugal force at the initial period of the filling without utilizing the pressure difference between the outside and the inside of the battery case 30 and the filling is carried out gradually utilizing storing centrifugal force as the rotational speed of a table is increased. The filling method is switched just before the finishing of a filling process to a filling method which uses both the pressure difference between the inside and the outside of the battery 30 and the centrifugal force. A sloped wall face 16 is provided in one portion of the

wall face in a side separated from a rotary shaft of a hopper 15 for temporarily storing the electrolyte for controlling the flow-out of the electrolyte from the hopper 15 by the strength of the centrifugal force applied to the electrolyte.

CLAIMS

[Claim(s)]

[Claim 1] Insert a separator between an anode and a negative electrode and an electrode group rolled spirally is accommodated in a cell case. How to use a centrifugal force to start pouring of an electrolysis solution: open an electrolysis solution pouring-in way wide to atmospheric pressure, successively use together a pressure differential and a centrifugal force of the inside and outside of a cell case and pour in an electrolysis solution for cells after making inside of said cell case into a vacuum.

[Claim 2] In an electrolysis solution pouring-in device used in order to pour an electrolysis solution into a cell of structure which accommodated an electrode group which sandwiched a separator between an anode and a negative electrode and was rolled spirally in a cell case: Air in a pouring-in hopper formed in said cell case and said electrolysis solution pouring-in device and a pouring-in way is discharged. After making inside of a cell case into a reduced pressure state, a centrifugal force is used to a pouring-in member and a cell case. An electrolysis solution which was supplied to an inside of said pouring-in hopper and was stored temporarily. While pouring is started in a cell case in the aforementioned reduced pressure state and the maximum centrifugal force that becomes settled with said pouring-in device is working, successively an electrolysis solution pouring-in device performing two steps of pouring in by opening a pouring-in way inside a pouring-in member wide to atmospheric pressure and pushing in in said cell case while decompressing an electrolysis solution by a pressure differential of the inside and outside of a cell case and concomitant use of a centrifugal force.

[Claim 3] Inside of the level surface in respect of the paries medialis orbitae of a hollow of two or more pouring-in hopper aggregates attached with an equivalent interval on a rotating table on a rotating table manufactured pivotable and the circumference of the core or a pouring-in hopper By providing an inclined plane which takes a wall surface of a side far from an axis of a rotating table for keeping away from an axis of a rotating table and goes up If a centrifugal force of the more than set as an electrolysis solution supplied to an inside of a hollow of a pouring-in hopper in connection with a high velocity revolution of a rotating table according to inclination of said inclined plane works An electrolysis solution which was supplied to a pars basilaris ossis occipitalis of a hopper and was stored goes up said inclined wall surface and it goes via a nozzle part etc. which flow into a pouring-in way extended to a radial direction of a rotating table and constitute a pouring-in way from an outlet hole established in the upper part Although poured in into a cell case held at a peripheral part of a rotating table The electrolysis solution pouring-in device according to claim 2 characterized by omitting a switching valve for electrolysis solutions from an electrolysis solution pouring-in member using a phenomenon in which an electrolysis solution has stagnated in a bottom of a hollow of a pouring-in hopper and goes up an inclined wall surface and it does not flow out from a pouring-in hopper when a centrifugal force is below a predetermined value.

[Claim 4] Among members which constitute a pouring-in member from an exit of a pouring-in hopper in the lower stream. And total of capacity of a building envelope of a member which constitutes a pouring-in way which consists of a hose allocated in the upper stream or a nozzle from an electrolysis pouring-in mouth It has the capacity of a more than equivalent to volume of an electrolysis solution which should be poured in into one cell case An electrolysis solution will flow out of the inside of a pouring-in hopper thoroughly with a centrifugal force by a high velocity revolution of a rotating table at least by the time of an end of a decompressing process in a cell case for every pouring-in operation at each time and a pouring-in way An electrolysis solution pouring-in device given in either

claim 2 wherein the whole quantity of an electrolysis solution is moving to an inside of a cell case or a pouring-in way or claim 3.

[Claim 5] Where inside of a cell case and a pouring-in way is made into a reduced pressure state rotational speed of a rotating table is low A centrifugal force committed to an electrolysis solution starts quiet pouring in in a cell case from a very small state of a centrifugal force which is $1/10$ or less [of the maximum centrifugal force which becomes settled with an electrolysis solution pouring-in device] The electrolysis solution pouring-in device according to any one of claims 2 to 4 continuing pouring in using a wide range centrifugal force to a state which the maximum centrifugal force that becomes settled from the source of power provided in a device and a means of transmitting power commits.

[Claim 6] A cell case which has an electrolysis solution inlet in a position which is separated from the center of the end face of having a positive pole terminal of a cell case An electrolysis solution pouring-in device is supplied with a posture in which a terminal area of said cell case is turned horizontally and an electrolysis solution inlet becomes the highest position of a cell case The electrolysis solution pouring-in device according to any one of claims 2 to 5 which pours in an electrolysis solution where it held and a terminal area of a cell case is horizontally turned regardless of existence of a centrifugal force.

[Claim 7] Two or more cell cases are arranged in at equal intervals with a posture which turned an axis of a cell case horizontally on 1 straight line on a cell case holding jig main parts said whole cell case holding jig being put in block and performing supply and extraction operation to an electrolysis solution pouring-in device -- and a hand of cut of a rotating table -- abbreviated where a cell case is fixed on a parallel straight line The electrolysis solution pouring-in device according to any one of claims 2 to 6 pouring in two or more cell cases fixed to each of two or more of said cell case holding jigs in parallel simultaneously.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[Detailed Description of the Invention]

[0001]

[Field of the Invention] This invention is in the state which decompressed the inside of a cell case and starts pouring in inside the cell case which uses a centrifugal force to an electrolysis solution and is in a reduced pressure state. Then it is related with the pouring-in method of an electrolysis solution and device which pour in according to concomitant use of the pressure differential and centrifugal force of the inside and outside of a cell case by opening a pouring-in way to atmospheric pressure.

[0002]

[Description of the Prior Art] In recent years the demand of cells [that it is highly efficient and high capacity] is growing with the spread of portable electric appliances. Corresponding to this a nickel hydride battery and various advanced batteries such as a rechargeable lithium-ion battery are developed and put in practical use. Not only the cell of cylindrical shape but effective development of a square-shaped cell for the small weight saving of a portable equipment is positively furthered also about the shape of a cell. Although these cells have the structure which accommodated the electrode group and electrolysis solution of the laminated structure which made the separator intervene between an anode and a negative electrode in the cell case in these cells in order to accommodate the electrolysis solution of the quantity which balanced the inside of a cell case as a lot of electrode groups and electrode groups as possible in order to attain high capacity-ization of a cell it is difficult to pour in an electrolysis solution efficiently into a cell case. In the obturation process which is a post process of pouring in if an electrolysis solution adheres near the opening of a cell when making the spreading effect of a sealing compound unstable in obturation by caulking and performing obturation by welding it becomes the cause of making a welding process unstable and reducing quality.

[0003]In order to solve such a technical problem as indicated by JP8-106896A The inside of a cell case is decompressed with the vacuum pump and the trial which is also going to use together the pressure differential of the inside and outside of a cell case and it is going to pour into the inside of a short time into a cell case is made using a centrifugal force to an electrolysis solution further.

[0004]According to said gazette a remarkable effect is accepted to shortening of pouring-in time by combining with decompressing the inside of a cell case and using and pouring a centrifugal force in an electrolysis solution but. At the moment of having opened the valve for pouring in and starting pouring in of an electrolysis solution inside a cell case since the electrolysis solution is energized by both the centrifugal force and the pressure differential of the inside and outside of a cell case The electrolysis solution which passed the valve part of the pouring-in way and advanced toward the cell case disperses around vigor ***** and the valve for pouring in and adheres also near a cell case opening and the problem of causing the result which is not preferred to the obturation process of a post process remains. If the liquefied electrolysis solution is poured in into the cell case in a reduced pressure state under atmospheric pressure the part is rapidly evaporated from the shape of liquid and in order that the air which was dissolving into the electrolysis solution further may make air bubbles and intermediary volume increase rapidly an electrolysis solution will disperse much more easily.

[0005]The cell case to which it is held on the rotating table which carries out a high velocity revolution and a centrifugal force is applied It is necessary to perform decompression of inside such as a pouring-in member switching operation of a pouring-in valve etc. and equipment serves as a quite complicated structure and an installation cost becomes expensive and is also holding the problem that a maintenance is troublesome as a production facility of a factory.

[0006]

[Problem(s) to be Solved by the Invention]In order for this invention to solve the above problems to pour in an electrolysis solution to the inside of a short time well

into a cell case and to make it not make most electrolysis solutions adhere the opening of a cell case and near a pouring-in mouth moreover Develop the quiet and quiet pouring-in method which scattering of an electrolysis solution does not produce and stabilization of the obturation process which is a post process and promotion of efficiency are attained and the electrolysis solution pouring-in method excellent in the productivity and reliability in which structure is comparatively easy an installation cost is cheap and a maintenance is also easy and its device are proposed.

[0007]

[Means for Solving the Problem] A side far from an axis of a rotating table in a part of paries-medialis-orbitae side of two or more pouring-in hoppers which fixed inside of the level surface at equal intervals on the circumference of a rotating table and the core on a rotating table manufactured pivotable at high speed It is considered as an inclined plane which takes for keeping away from an axis of a rotating table and goes up and a small hole into which an electrolysis solution can flow is provided in the upper part of this inclined wall surface. It is connected to this hole and a pouring-in mouth of a cell case into which an electrolysis solution should be poured is airtightly connected to an end of a pouring-in way extended to an outside diameter direction of a rotating table and it is considered as structure which fixed a cell case to a peripheral part of a rotating table.

[0008] And the specified quantity of an electrolysis solution which should be poured in to one cell is supplied to each hollow in a pouring-in hopper and a lid of a pouring-in hopper is closed and sealed. Then air it was [air] full of space of inside such as a pouring-in hopper a pouring-in way and a cell case is discharged on a wall surface of the pouring-in hopper inside using a vacuum pump connected to a vacuum suction hole in which it was provided in the upper part of a side near an axis of a rotating table and these insides are decompressed. Some air which was being dissolved into an electrolysis solution into this decompressing process low boiling point components in an electrolysis solution etc. serve as air bubbles and are discharged. Of course since change will

arise for an ingredient of an electrolysis solution and an adverse effect will be brought to a battery characteristic if a degree of vacuum is raised very much to a degree exceeding a tolerance limit which becomes settled with an electrolysis solution it is necessary to grasp a priori an allowable limit which can be decompressed.

[0009] Thus if the high velocity revolution of the rotating table is carried out after decompression until it becomes a predetermined degree of vacuum about inside such as a pouring-in hopper a cell case and a pouring-in way A centrifugal force works to an electrolysis solution which was supplied to a bottom of a pouring-in hopper and was stored an electrolysis solution will flow through said inclined plane of a pouring-in hopper in the direction going up and an electrolysis solution will be injected into an inside of a cell case via outflow and a pouring-in way from a hollow of a pouring-in hopper. For this reason a valve for opening and closing for controlling an outflow of an electrolysis solution becomes unnecessary from a pouring-in member. Under the present circumstances if inclination of an inclined plane of a pouring-in hopper is set up gently-sloping and a table is made to rotate using a comparatively small motor of running torque some pouring-in time will be extended but. Rotational speed of a rotating table will be able to pour in comparatively late almost all quantity of an electrolysis solution which should be poured in quietly from a little small stage of a centrifugal force rotational speed of a table will take for going up gradually and it will pour in powerfully with acceleration by a strong centrifugal force. Since there is no influence of a pressure differential of the inside and outside of a cell case in this pouring in it is possible to perform very quiet to pour in. When inclination of an inclined plane of a pouring-in hopper is strengthened torque of a motor for table rotation is made into a big thing and a table sets up further rotational speed which reaches eventually highly it is possible to aim at shortening of pouring-in time to shorten especially pouring-in time.

[0010] Since most fears of a pressure differential of the inside and outside of a cell case being also small just before an end of a pouring-in process and an

electrolysis solution dispersing have disappeared Since it poses a problem that variation arises in an injection rate of an electrolysis solution to each cell rather when [even when it is small in a pouring-in way] an unpoured in electrolysis solution remainsshortening of pouring-in time andA pouring-in way is wide opened to atmospheric pressureinto a cell caseboth a centrifugal force and a pressure differential of the inside and outside of a cell case are used togetherand an electrolysis solution is poured in.

[0011]

[Embodiment of the Invention]Hereafteran example especially carried out to the square-shaped lithium cell about the electrolysis solution pouring-in device of this invention is explained brieflyreferring to drawings.

[0012]Drawing 1 is the sectional view seen from the front direction which shows the structure of the outline of the whole electrolysis solution pouring-in device of this inventionDecompression of the inside of a cell case [in / in drawing 2 / the electrolysis solution pouring-in device of this invention]and a pouring-in wayIt is a figure showing the mutual timing about the centrifugal-force grant to the return to atmospheric pressurea cell caseand an electrolysis solutionetc.drawing 3 is a transverse-plane sectional view showing the structure of the outline of the principal part of the electrolysis solution pouring-in device of this inventionand drawing 4 is a top view of drawing 1. Drawing 5 is a perspective view in which being able to pour in without moreover making an electrolysis solution adhere near the pouring-in mouth of a cell efficiently with the electrolysis solution pouring-in device of this inventionbeing dramatically stabilized in the obturation process which is moreover a post processand showing the appearance of the possible square-shaped cell of obturation processing. Drawing 6 is a figure showing the shape inside a pouring-in hopperespecially the situation of the inclined wall surface established in the hollowed part. Drawing 7 is a top view showing the shape of the pouring-in hopper used with the electrolysis solution pouring-in device of this inventiona pouring-in wayand a cell case holding jigand mutual physical relationship.

[0013]As shown in drawing 1drawing 4etc.it is supported by the axis of rotation 2 and the inside of the level surface to six each which becomes at equal intervals on the rotating table on the rotating table 1 in which a high velocity revolution is possible and the circumference of the core. The pouring-in hopper 15 the pouring-in way 22 the cell case holding jig 14 the cell case 30 etc. are allocated in order towards the outside diameter direction along the abbreviated radial direction of a rotating table from the center. In this electrolysis solution pouring-in device as shown in drawing 7 the ten square-shaped cell cases 30 can be put in order held and put in block at equal intervals on a straight line using the cell case holding jig 14 and it can perform now supply of said cell case 30 drawing and pouring in. In the following explanation although the pouring-in operation about one cell is explained in many cases it is understood [have / you / I / **] that same processing is simultaneously performed in parallel about many other cells.

[0014]First the structure of the outline of an electrolysis solution pouring-in device is explained. As shown in drawing 3 and drawing 6 the electrolysis solution 31 equivalent to one cell is supplied to the pouring-in hopper 15 and the hollow 24 which can be stored temporarily is established in ten places and linear shape at equal intervals. And although the inclined plane 16 whose inclination is 70 degrees - about 80 degrees is formed about the portion which is most separated from the axis of the rotating table 1 among the wall surfaces of each hollow 24 the hole 17 for an electrolysis solution outflow is formed in the upper bed part of the inclined plane 16 towards the abbreviated outside diameter direction of the rotating table 1 the flexible hose 39 the nozzle 23 etc. which constitute a pouring-in way are connected to the downstream and it goes via these The pouring-in mouth 32 of a cell case like drawing 5 is turned horizontally it is fixed to the cell case (however pouring-in mouth 32 becomes highest position of cell case 30 like) holding jig 14 and the cell case 30 is airtightly connected to an end on a pouring-in way. At this time the cell case 30 is fixed to the peripheral part of the rotating table 1 via a cell case holding jig.

[0015]Into the portion near the axis 2 of a rotating table near the upper bed part of

the pouring-in hopper 15. When carrying out vacuum suction of the hole 35 for supplying an electrolysis solution the inside of the cell case 30 and the pouring-in way 22 etc. and decompressing them it is connected to the hole 21 which the hole 18 used as a passage of the air discharged was formed and was provided in the axis part of the rotating table via the flexible hose 19 It is connected to the vacuum pump 13 via the rotary joint 10 the electromagnetic valve 11 for vacuum the hose 27 which were provided in the lower end part of the further aforementioned axis 2.

[0016] As shown in drawing 1 in the upper part of the pouring-in hopper 15. It is opened only when it is energized with the torsion spring 29 and the electrolysis solution 31 is supplied to the hollow in a pouring-in hopper from the electrolysis solution fixed-quantity-discharging nozzle 40 and during the high velocity revolution of the case where other pouring-in ways are decompressed by the vacuum or a table it is always closed and the lid 20 for keeping it airtight is formed.

[0017] When supply a cell to the rotating table 1 hold to it and discharging to it or supplying an electrolysis solution to the pouring-in hopper 15 Although it is not necessary to carry out the high velocity revolution of the rotating table 1 since it is preferred that the stop position of a table stops correctly to a position drive with the geared motor 5 of small capacity but. When using the centrifugal force by a high velocity revolution and pouring in into the cell case 30 the comparatively big rotation torque of the induction motor 8 is slightly slowed down by the timing belt 9 and the pulleys 34 and 25 and is transmitted to the axis 2 of a rotating table.

The selection change of whether to drive under the power of which motor among these motors for two table rotation can be performed using the electromagnetic clutch 7 the magnet switch which is not illustrated etc. according to the occasional operation of an electrolysis solution pouring-in device.

[0018] Next an example of operation of the outline of the electrolysis solution pouring-in device by this invention is explained. In first the state where set regular intervals to the cell case holding jig 14 by having made the square-shaped cell case 30 into a ten-piece unit and it fixed to 1 linear shape. Rotating the rotating

table 1 with 1/6 every rotation and the geared motor 5. One by one after supplying and fixing to six positions on a rotating table the nozzle 23 in the end piece of the pouring-in way which makes the pouring-in hopper 15 the origin is put in the pouring-in mouth 32 of the cell case 30 and it connects with a cell case at airtightness (packing is allocated in the circumference of a nozzle). Next the specified quantity of the electrolysis solution 31 which is equivalent to each of the hollow 24 of the pouring-in hopper 15 from the electrolysis solution feed holes 35 at one cell. After supplying by carrying out the parallel run of two or more constant delivery pumps which are not illustrated and sealing the lid 20 the vacuum pump 13 is worked and hollow 24 inside of the cell case 30 the pouring-in way 22 and the pouring-in hopper 15 etc. are decompressed until it is set to about -700 mmHg. In order to use together both of a centrifugal force who commit the reduced pressure state in a pouring-in way to the decompression after a check and within a cell case and an electrolysis solution with the pressure switch 38 for vacuums and to pour in efficiently the induction motor 8 is started and the high velocity revolution of the rotating table 1 is started.

[0019] If the rotating table 1 begins rotation and comes to carry out a high velocity revolution gradually as shown in drawing 2 if a centrifugal force works also to the electrolysis solution 31 in the pouring-in hopper group 15 and a centrifugal force becomes 10G (gravitational acceleration is set to 1G) grade an electrolysis solution will begin to go up the aforementioned inclined wall surface 16 established in the hollow 24 in the pouring-in hopper 15 and it will begin to flow in the pouring-in way 22. Although the rotational speed of the rotating table 1 continues a rise and about 350G is reached eventually also after that it does in this way and the electrolysis solution 31 currently supplied in the pouring-in hopper 15 flows out of a pouring-in hopper altogether and flows in a pouring-in way or the cell case 30. When the electrolysis solution was exhausted to pouring-in hopper 15 inside by stopping operation of the vacuum pump 13 gradually by opening a pouring-in way to the atmosphere change the aforementioned electromagnetic valve 11 for vacuums connected to the exhaust passage of

air use together a centrifugal force and the pressure differential of the inside and outside of a cell case push in an electrolysis solution in the cell case 30 and Or shortening of pouring-in time The electrolysis solution which remains on a pouring-in way is lessened as much as possible and variation in the amount of pouring in is lessened.

[0020] Since most air which was in the cell case 30 before the pouring-in start by adoption of such a pouring-in method is discharged besides the cell case the opening within a cell case is easily replaced by the electrolysis solution 31 and pouring in progresses efficiently. Since the powerful centrifugal force is also committed the strong power of facing to an electrolysis solution from the entrance side of a cell case in a bottom direction works according to the difference of the density of an electrolysis solution and air and the unimpregnated portion of the electrolysis solution which remained easily to the central part of the electrode group by the vacuum pouring-in method is also canceled comparatively in the inside of a short time. When pouring in this invention although the rotational speed of a table is also about 10G-15G small and begins to pour in quietly in a cell case using the decompression within a cell case and a small centrifugal force at the time of the start of pouring in the centrifugal force applied to an electrolysis solution When the rotational speed of the table reached 1000 rpm of the highest speed it became large to about 350G and it has set up so that strong acceleration may be used to an electrolysis solution and it can perform efficient pouring in. From just before the end of a pouring-in process a pouring-in way is wide opened to the atmosphere and the pressure differential of the inside and outside of a cell case is also used together and poured in. Thus while pouring the efficient electrolysis solution in the inside of a short time the pouring-in method which does not disperse an electrolysis solution on the outskirts of a pouring-in mouth of a cell case or it is not made to adhere could be used.

[0021]

[Effect of the Invention] It is an electrolysis solution pouring-in device comparatively simple as a device which also uses a centrifugal force to an

electrolysis solution and is simultaneously poured in in a cell case where the inside of a cell case is decompressed and moreover an electrolysis solution can be efficiently poured in in a cell case in a short time. An electrolysis solution in the first stage poured into a cell case. The inside of a cell case is made into a reduced pressure state and it is only using a centrifugal force since the pressure differential of the inside and outside of a cell case is not used quiet pouring in is possible for it therefore there is little scattering of an electrolysis solution since there is no adhesion of an electrolysis solution near a pouring-in mouth there are few troubles in the obturation process of a post process and quality is stabilized. Since it is enabling to parallel pour in to further two or more cells it is also a very efficient electrolysis solution pouring-in device and the reduction effect of a manufacturing cost is large.

DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

[Brief Description of the Drawings]

[Drawing 1] The front direction sectional view showing the structure of the outline of the whole electrolysis solution pouring-in device of this invention

[Drawing 2] The figure in the pouring-in process of this invention showing an example about mutual timings such as decompression centrifugal-force grant and an atmospheric pressure return

[Drawing 3] The transverse-plane sectional view showing the structure of the outline of the principal part of the electrolysis solution pouring-in device of this invention

[Drawing 4] The top view showing the structure of the outline of the whole electrolysis solution pouring-in device of this invention

[Drawing 5] The perspective view of the appearance of the square-shaped cell which pours in using the device of this invention

[Drawing 6] (a) The sectional view by the X-X' cutting plane of the pouring-in

hopper group of top view (b) this invention which shows the pouring-in hopper of the electrolysis solution pouring-in device of this invention

[Drawing 7]The top view showing the shape of a pouring-in hopper a pouring-in way and a cell case holding jig and physical relationship mutual [these]

[Description of Notations]

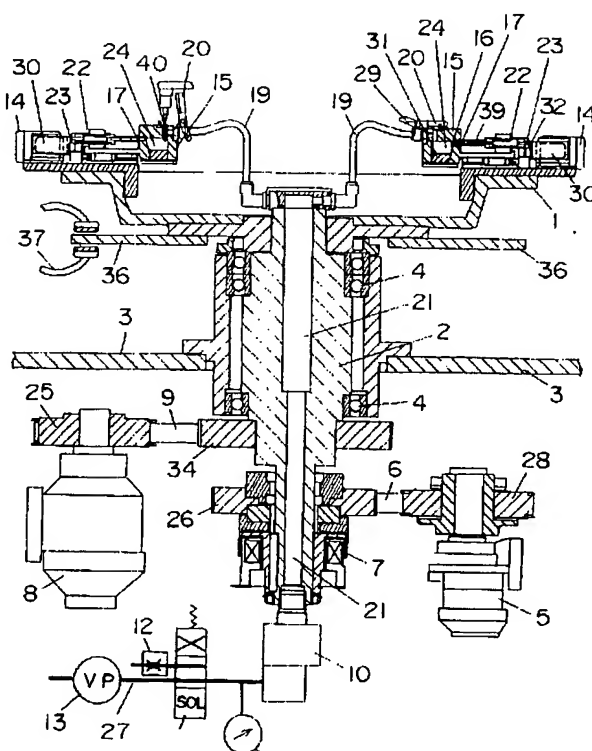
- 1 Rotating table
- 2 Rotating table axis
- 3 Electrolysis solution pouring-in device frame
- 4 Bearing
- 5 Geared motor
- 6 Timing belt
- 7 Electromagnetic clutch
- 8 Induction motor (with a brake)
- 9 Timing belt
- 10 Rotary joint
- 11 The electromagnetic valve for vacuums
- 12 Throttle valve
- 13 Vacuum pump
- 14 Cell case holding jig
- 15 Pouring-in hopper
- 16 Inclined wall surface
- 17 Electrolysis solution discharge hole
- 18 Air exhaust hole
- 19 Flexible hose
- 20 Pouring-in hopper lid
- 21 Air exhaust hole
- 22 Pouring-in way
- 23 Nozzle
- 24 Pouring-in hopper hollow
- 25 Pulley

- 26 Pulley
 - 27 Hose
 - 28 A pulley with a torque limiter
 - 29 Torsion spring
 - 30 Cell case
 - 31 Electrolysis solution
 - 32 Cell case pouring-in mouth
 - 33 Positive pole terminal
 - 34 Pulley
 - 35 Electrolysis solution feed holes
 - 36 Brake disc
 - 37 Brake
 - 38 The pressure switch for vacuums
 - 39 Flexible hose
 - 40 Electrolysis solution constant delivery pump nozzle
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101J



【特許請求の範囲】

【請求項1】 正極と負極の間にセパレーターをはさみ、渦巻状に巻いた電極群を電池ケース内に収容し、前記電池ケース内を真空状態にした後、遠心力を働かせて電解液の注入を開始し、引き続いて電解液注液路を大気圧に開放し、電池ケース内外の圧力差と遠心力を併用して、電池用電解液の注液を行う方法。

【請求項2】 正極と負極の間にセパレーターをはさみ、渦巻状に巻いた電極群を電池ケース内に収容した構造の電池に電解液を注入するために用いられる電解液注液装置において、前記電池ケースと前記電解液注液装置に設けられた注液ホッパーおよび注液路内のエアを排出し、電池ケース内を減圧状態にした後、注液部材および電池ケースに遠心力を働かせて、前記注液ホッパーの内部に供給され一時的に貯えられていた電解液を、前記の減圧状態にある電池ケース内に注入を開始し、引き続いて、前記注液装置により定まる最大の遠心力が働いているうちに、注液部材内部の注液路を大気圧に開放し、電池ケース内外の圧力差および遠心力の併用にて電解液を減圧中の前記電池ケース内に押し込むことにより、2段階の注液を行うことを特徴とする電解液注液装置。

【請求項3】 水平面内を回転可能に製作された回転テーブル上の回転テーブルと同芯の円周上に、均等な間隔をもって取り付けられた複数個の注液ホッパー集合体、または注液ホッパーの窪みの内側壁面で、回転テーブルの軸芯から遠い側の壁面を、回転テーブルの軸芯から遠ざかるに連れて上昇する傾斜面を設けることにより、回転テーブルの高速回転に伴って注液ホッパーの窪み内部に供給された電解液に、前記傾斜面の勾配に応じて設定された以上の遠心力が働くと、ホッパーの底部に供給されて貯えられていた電解液が、前記傾斜壁面を昇り、その上部に設けられた出口孔より、回転テーブルのラジアル方向に伸びる注液路に流れ込み、注液路を構成するノズル部などを經由して、回転テーブルの外周部に保持された電池ケース内に注入されるが、遠心力が所定値以下の場合には電解液が注液ホッパーの窪みの底に滞留したままであり、傾斜壁面を昇り注液ホッパーより流出することは無いという現象を利用して、電解液注液部材から電解液用の開閉バルブを省略したことを特徴とする請求項2に記載の電解液注液装置。

【請求項4】 注液部材を構成する部材のうちで、注液ホッパーの出口より下流で、かつ電解注液口より上流に配設されたホースやノズルからなる注液路を構成する部材の内部空間の容積の総和が、1個の電池ケース内に注入されるべき電解液の体積に相当する以上の容積を有し、少なくとも毎回の注液動作毎の電池ケース及び注液路内の減圧工程終了時迄に、回転テーブルの高速回転による遠心力で電解液が注液ホッパー内から完全に流出して、電解液の全量が電池ケース内部または注液路に移動していることを特徴とする請求項2または請求項3のい

ずれかに記載の電解液注液装置。

【請求項5】 電池ケースおよび注液路内を減圧状態とした状態で回転テーブルの回転スピードが低く、電解液に働く遠心力が電解液注液装置により定まる最大遠心力の1/10以下である遠心力の非常に小さい状態から電池ケース内に穏やかな注液を開始し、装置に設けられた動力源および動力伝達手段より定まる最大の遠心力が働く状態まで、広範囲な遠心力を利用して注液を継続することを特徴とする請求項2から4のいずれかに記載の電解液注液装置。

【請求項6】 電池ケースの正極端子を有する端面の中心から離れた位置に電解液注入口を有する電池ケースを、前記電池ケースの端子部を水平方向に向け、かつ電解液注入口が電池ケースの最も高い位置になるような姿勢で電解液注液装置に供給、保持し、遠心力の有無に無関係に電池ケースの端子部を水平方向に向けた状態で電解液を注液する請求項2から5のいずれかに記載の電解液注液装置。

【請求項7】 複数個の電池ケースを、電池ケースの軸芯を水平方向に向けた姿勢で電池ケース保持治具本体上の1直線上に等間隔に並べて、前記電池ケース保持治具ごと一括して電解液注液装置に供給、取り出し動作を行い、かつ回転テーブルの回転方向に略平行な直線上に、電池ケースを固定した状態で、複数個の前記電池ケース保持治具のそれぞれに固定された複数個の電池ケースに同時に並行して注液することを特徴とする請求項2から6のいずれかに記載の電解液注液装置。

【発明の詳細な説明】

【0001】

【発明の属する技術分野】 本発明は電池ケース内部を減圧した状態で、電解液に遠心力を働かせて減圧状態にある電池ケース内部に注液を開始し、その後、注液路を大気圧に開放することにより、電池ケース内外の圧力差と遠心力の併用により注液を行う、電解液の注液方法および装置に関するものである。

【0002】

【従来の技術】 近年、携帯用電気機器の普及と共に、高性能で高容量な電池の需要が増大している。これに対応して、ニッケル水素電池や、リチウムイオン二次電池など様々な高性能電池が開発され、実用化されている。また電池の形状に関しても、円筒形状の電池ばかりでなく、携帯用機器の小形軽量化のために有効な、角形電池の開発も積極的に進められている。これらの電池は正極と負極の間にセパレーターを介在させた積層構造の電極群と電解液を電池ケース内に収容した構造を有するが、これらの電池においては、電池の高容量化を図るために、電池ケース内部に可能な限り大量の電極群と、電極群に見合った量の電解液を収容しようとするために、電解液を電池ケース内に能率的に注入することが困難とな

て、電池の開口部付近に電解液が付着すると、カシメによる封口においてはシール剤の塗布効果を不安定にし、溶接による封口を行う場合においても、溶接工程を不安定にして品質を低下させる原因となる。

【0003】このような課題を解決するために、特開平8-106896号公報にも開示されているように、電池ケース内部を真空ポンプにより減圧しておき、さらに遠心力を電解液に働かせながら、電池ケース内外の圧力差をも併用して短時間の内に、電池ケース内に注入しようとする試みがなされている。

【0004】前記公報によれば、電池ケース内部を減圧することに併せて、電解液に遠心力をも働かせて注液することにより、注液時間の短縮に対して、かなりの効果が認められるが、注液用バルブを開き電池ケース内部に電解液の注液を開始した瞬間に、電解液が遠心力と電池ケース内外の圧力差の両者により付勢されているために、注液路のバルブ部を通過し電池ケースに向かって進んだ電解液が勢いあまって、注液用バルブの周囲に飛散して電池ケース開口部付近にも付着し、後工程の封口工程に対して好ましくない結果を招くという問題点が残る。また、大気圧の下で液状であった電解液が、減圧状態にある電池ケース内に注入されると、その一部は液状から急激に気化し、さらに電解液中に溶解していた空気などは気泡となつて体積を急増させるために電解液が一層飛散し易い。

【0005】さらに、高速回転する回転テーブル上に保持されて遠心力が加えられる電池ケース、注液部材などの内部の減圧や注液バルブの開閉操作などを行う必要があり、設備がかなり複雑な構造となり、設備費は高価となり工場の生産設備としてはメンテナンスが面倒であるという問題点をも抱えている。

【0006】

【発明が解決しようとする課題】本発明は上記のような問題点を解決するもので、電池ケース内に電解液を短時間のうちに能率良く注入し、しかも電池ケースの開口部や注液口の付近に電解液をほとんど付着させないようにするため、電解液の飛散が生じない、静かで穏やかな注液方法を開発し、後工程である封口工程の安定化、能率化を図ると共に、比較的構造が簡単で設備費が安価で、メンテナンスも容易な、生産性と信頼性に優れた電解液注液方法およびその装置を提案する。

【0007】

【課題を解決するための手段】水平面内を高速で回転可能に製作された回転テーブル上の、回転テーブルと同芯の円周上に等間隔に固定した複数個の注液ホッパーの内側壁面の一部で回転テーブルの軸芯から遠い側を、回転テーブルの軸芯から遠ざかるに連れて上昇する傾斜面としておき、この傾斜壁面の上部には、電解液が流出可能な小さな孔を設ける。この孔に接続され、回転テーブルの外縁方向に伸びる注液路の主軸には電解液を注入され

るべき電池ケースの注液口が気密に接続されると共に、回転テーブルの外周部に対して電池ケースを固定した構造とする。

【0008】そして、注液ホッパー内のそれぞれの窪みに、1個の電池に対して注液すべき電解液の所定量を供給しておき、注液ホッパーの蓋を閉じて密閉する。引き続いて、注液ホッパー、注液路、電池ケースなどの内部の空間に充満していたエアーを、注液ホッパー内側の壁面で、回転テーブルの軸芯に近い側の上部に設けられた真空吸引孔に接続された真空ポンプを用いて排出して、これらの内部を減圧する。この減圧工程中に、電解液中に溶解していたエアーや、電解液中の低沸点成分などは多少気泡となって排出される。もちろん、真空度を電解液により定まる許容限度を越えて極度に高めると電解液の成分に変化が生じ、電池特性に悪影響をもたらすので、減圧可能な許容限界を事前に把握しておく必要がある。

【0009】このようにして、注液ホッパー、電池ケース、注液路などの内部を所定の真空度になるまで減圧後、回転テーブルを高速回転させると、注液ホッパーの底に供給され貯えられていた電解液に遠心力が働き、電解液は注液ホッパーの前記傾斜面を上昇する方向に流れて、注液ホッパーの窪みより流れ出し、注液路を経由して電池ケースの内部に電解液が注入されることになる。このために注液部材から電解液の流出を制御するための開閉用バルブは不要となる。この際、注液ホッパーの傾斜面の勾配をなだらかに設定しておき、回転トルクの比較的小さなモーターを用いて、テーブルを回転駆動させると、注液時間は多少伸びるが、回転テーブルの回転スピードが比較的遅く遠心力のやや小さい段階から、注液すべき電解液のほとんどの量を穏やかに注液することが可能であり、テーブルの回転スピードが徐々に上昇してくるに連れて、強い遠心力による加速度により強力に注入することとなる。この注液の場合、電池ケース内外の圧力差の影響は全く無いので、非常に穏やかな注液を行うことが可能である。特に注液時間を短縮したい場合には、注液ホッパーの傾斜面の勾配を強くし、テーブル回転駆動用モーターのトルクを大きなものとし、さらにテーブルが最終的に到達する回転スピードを高く設定することにより、注液時間の短縮を図ることが可能である。

【0010】なお、注液工程の終了直前には、電池ケース内外の圧力差も小さくなっており、電解液が飛散する心配はほとんど無くなっているため、むしろ、注液時間の短縮や、注液路内に僅かでも未注入の電解液が残留することにより、それぞれの電池に対する、電解液の注入量にバラツキが生じることが問題となるので、注液路を大気圧に開放し、電解液を電池ケース内に遠心力と電池ケース内外の圧力差の両方を併用して注入する。

【0011】

【発明の実施の形態】以下、図面を参照しながら、本発

明の電解液注液装置について、特に、角形リチウム電池に対して実施した一例について簡単に説明する。

【0012】図1は本発明の電解液注液装置全体の概略の構造を示す正面方向から見た断面図であり、図2は本発明の電解液注液装置における電池ケース内および注液路の減圧、大気圧への復帰、電池ケース及び電解液に対する遠心力付与などに関する相互のタイミングを示す図であり、図3は本発明の電解液注液装置の主要部の概略の構造を示す正面断面図であり、図4は図1の平面図である。図5は本発明の電解液注液装置により能率的に、しかも電池の注液口の付近に電解液を付着させることなく注液可能で、しかも後工程である封口工程において、非常に安定して封口処理の可能な角形電池の外観を示す斜視図である。図6は注液ホッパー内部の形状、特に窪み部に設けられた傾斜壁面の様子を示す図である。図7は本発明の電解液注液装置で用いられる注液ホッパー、注液路、電池ケース保持治具の形状と相互の位置関係を示す平面図である。

【0013】図1、図4などに示すように、回転軸2に支持されて水平面内を高速回転可能な回転テーブル1上の回転テーブルと同芯の円周上で等間隔になる6箇所のそれぞれに、注液ホッパー15、注液路22、電池ケース保持治具14、電池ケース30などが、回転テーブルの略ラジアル方向に沿って、センターから外径方向に向け順番に配設されている。また、この電解液注液装置においては、図7に示すように、電池ケース保持治具14を利用して、一直線上に等間隔に10個の角形電池ケース30を並べて保持し、一括して前記電池ケース30の供給、取出し、注液を行うことが出来るようになっている。以下の説明では、電池1個についての注液動作について説明をする場合が多いが、他の多数の電池についても、同様の処理が同時に並行して行われていると理解して頂きたい。

【0014】まず、電解液注液装置の概略の構造を説明する。図3および図6に示すように、注液ホッパー15には、電池1個分に相当する電解液31を供給し、一時的に貯えておくことの出来る窪み24が10箇所、直線状に等間隔に設けられている。そして、それぞれの窪み24の壁面のうち、回転テーブル1の軸芯から最も離れた部分については、勾配が $70^{\circ} \sim 80^{\circ}$ 程度の傾斜面16が設けられているが、その傾斜面16の上端部には、電解液流出用の孔17が、回転テーブル1の略外径方向に向けて設けられ、その下流側には注液路を構成するフレキシブルホース39、ノズル23などが接続され、これらを経由して、末端には電池ケース30が、図5のような電池ケースの注液口32を水平方向に向けて（但し、注液口32が電池ケース30の最も高い位置になるように）電池ケース保持治具14に固定され、かつ、注液路に気密に接続される。このとき、電池ケース30は電池ケース保持治具14に固定され、回転テーブル1の

外周部に固定される。

【0015】注液ホッパー15の上端部付近で回転テーブルの軸2に近い部分には、電解液を供給するための孔35と、電池ケース30内、注液路22内などを真空吸引し減圧する際に、排出されるエアの通路として使用される孔18が設けられ、フレキシブルホース19を経由して回転テーブルの軸芯部に設けられた孔21に接続され、さらに前記の軸2の下端部に設けられたロータリージョイント10や真空用電磁弁11、ホース27などを経由して真空ポンプ13に接続されている。

【0016】また、図1に示すように注液ホッパー15の上部には、ねじりバネ29で付勢されて、電解液定量吐出ノズル40より電解液31を注液ホッパー内の窪みに供給する時にのみ開かれ、その他の注液路が真空中に減圧される場合やテーブルの高速回転中には常時閉じられ、気密に保つための蓋20が設けられている。

【0017】回転テーブル1に電池を供給、保持し、排出したり、注液ホッパー15に電解液を供給する際には、回転テーブル1を高速回転させる必要がないが、テーブルの停止位置は所定の位置に正確に停止することが好ましいので、小容量のギアードモーター5により駆動するが、高速回転による遠心力を働かせて電池ケース30内に注液をする際には、比較的大きなインダクションモーター8の回転駆動トルクを、タイミングベルト9とプーリー34と25でわずかに減速し回転テーブルの軸2に伝達している。なお、これらの2台のテーブル回転駆動用モーターのうち、いずれのモーターの動力で駆動するかを選択切替は、電解液注液装置の、その時々動作に応じて、電磁クラッチ7、図示しないマグネットスイッチなどを利用して行うことが出来る。

【0018】次に、本発明による電解液注液装置の概略の動作の一例を説明する。まず、角形電池ケース30を10個単位として、電池ケース保持治具14に等間隔において1直線状に固定した状態で、回転テーブル1を1/6回転づつ、ギアードモーター5で回転させながら、順次、回転テーブル上の所定の位置6箇所に供給し固定した後、注液ホッパー15を源流とする注液路の末端部にあるノズル23を、電池ケース30の注液口32に挿し込み、電池ケースと気密に接続する（ノズルの周囲にはパッキンを配設している）。次に、注液ホッパー15の窪み24のそれぞれに、電解液供給孔35から電池1個分に相当する電解液31の所定量を、図示しない複数の定量吐出ポンプを並列運転することにより供給し、蓋20を密閉した後、真空ポンプ13を稼働させて、電池ケース30、注液路22、注液ホッパー15の窪み24内部などを、 -700mmHg 程度になるまで減圧する。注液路内の減圧状態を真空用圧力スイッチ38により確認後、電池ケース内の減圧と電解液に働く遠心力の両者を併用して能率的に注液を行うために、インダクションモーター8を駆動させて回転テーブル1の高速回転を7

タートさせる。

【0019】図2に示すように回転テーブル1が回転を始めて徐々に高速回転するようになると、注液ホッパー群15内の電解液31にも遠心力が働き、遠心力が10G（重力の加速度を1Gとする）程度になると、注液ホッパー15内の窪み24に設けられた前記の傾斜壁面16を電解液が昇り始め、注液路22内に流入し始める。その後も回転テーブル1の回転スピードは上昇を続け、最終的には350G程度に迄到達するが、このようにして注液ホッパー15内に供給されていた電解液31はすべて注液ホッパーから流出して注液路内、または電池ケース30内に流入する。注液ホッパー15内部に電解液が無くなった頃に、真空ポンプ13の運転を停止させることにより徐々に、またはエアーの排出路に接続された前記の真空用電磁弁11を切り替えて、注液路を大気に開放することにより遠心力と電池ケース内外の圧力差を併用して電池ケース30内に電解液を押し込み、注液時間の短縮と、注液路に残留する電解液を可能な限り少なくして、注液量のバラツキを少なくする。

【0020】このような注液方法の採用により注液開始前に電池ケース30内に有ったエアーの殆どは電池ケースの外に排出されているので、電池ケース内の空隙は電解液31により容易に置換されて、注液は能率的に進む。また、強力な遠心力も働いているので、電解液とエアーの密度の差により、電解液に電池ケースの入口側から底方向に向かう強い力が働き、真空注液法では電極群の中心部に残留し易かった電解液の未含浸部分も比較的短時間のうちに解消される。本発明の注液を行う際に、電解液に加えられる遠心力は、注液の開始時には、テーブルの回転スピードも小さく10G～15G程度であり、電池ケース内の減圧と小さな遠心力を利用して電池ケース内に穏やかに注液を始めるが、テーブルの回転スピードが最高スピードの1000rpmに到達した時点では350G程度迄大きくなり、電解液に対して強い加速度を働かせて能率的な注液が出来るように設定している。また、注液工程の終了直前からは、注液路を大気に開放して電池ケース内外の圧力差も併用して注入する。このようにして短時間のうちに能率的な電解液の注液を行うと同時に、電池ケースの注液口周辺に電解液を飛散させたり、付着させることの無い注液方法を利用出来るようになった。

【0021】

【発明の効果】電池ケース内を減圧した状態で、同時に、電解液に遠心力をも働かせて電池ケース内に注液する装置としては比較的シンプルな電解液注液装置であり、しかも短時間で能率的に電池ケース内に電解液を注液することが出来る。さらに、電解液を電池ケースに注入する初期には、電池ケース内を減圧状態として遠心力を働かせるのみであり、電池ケース内外の圧力差は利用

飛散が少なく、注液口付近に電解液の付着が無いので、後工程の封口工程でのトラブルが少なく、品質が安定する。さらに複数個の電池に対して、並列的な注液を可能としているので大変能率的な電解液注液装置でもあり、製造コストの削減効果大きい。

【図面の簡単な説明】

【図1】本発明の電解液注液装置全体の概略の構造を示す正面方向断面図

【図2】本発明の注液工程における、減圧、遠心力付与、大気圧復帰など相互のタイミングについての一例を示す図

【図3】本発明の電解液注液装置の主要部の概略の構造を示す正面断面図

【図4】本発明の電解液注液装置全体の概略の構造を示す平面図

【図5】本発明の装置を用いて注液を行う角形電池の外観の斜視図

【図6】（a）本発明の電解液注液装置の注液ホッパーを示す平面図（b）本発明の注液ホッパー群のX-X'切断面による断面図

【図7】注液ホッパー、注液路、電池ケース保持治具の形状と、これら相互の位置関係を示す平面図

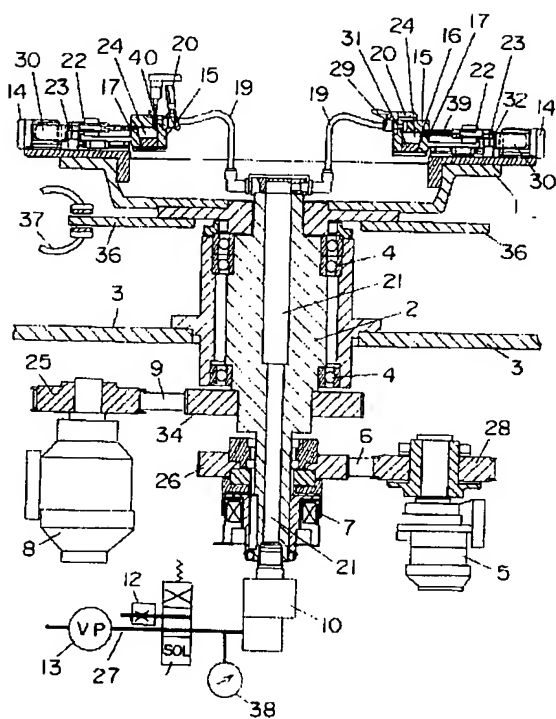
【符号の説明】

- 1 回転テーブル
- 2 回転テーブル軸
- 3 電解液注液装置フレーム
- 4 軸受け
- 5 ギアードモーター
- 6 タイミングベルト
- 7 電磁クラッチ
- 8 インダクションモーター（ブレーキ付）
- 9 タイミングベルト
- 10 ロータリージョイント
- 11 真空用電磁弁
- 12 絞り弁
- 13 真空ポンプ
- 14 電池ケース保持治具
- 15 注液ホッパー
- 16 傾斜壁面
- 17 電解液流出孔
- 18 エアー排気孔
- 19 フレキシブルホース
- 20 注液ホッパー蓋
- 21 エアー排気孔
- 22 注液路
- 23 ノズル
- 24 注液ホッパー窪み
- 25 プーリー
- 26 プーリー
- 27 ホーフ

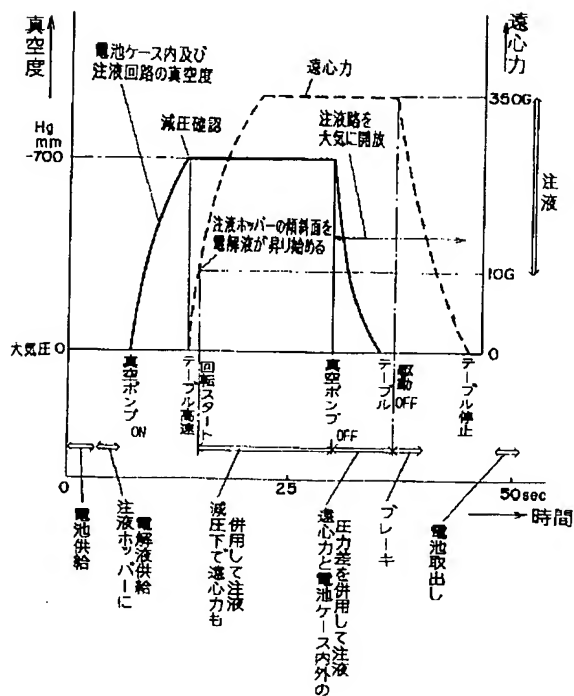
- 28 トルクリミッター付プーリー
- 29 ねじりバネ
- 30 電池ケース
- 31 電解液
- 32 電池ケース注液口
- 33 正極端子
- 34 プーリー

- 35 電解液供給孔
- 36 ブレーキディスク
- 37 ブレーキ
- 38 真空用圧力スイッチ
- 39 フレキシブルホース
- 40 電解液定量吐出ポンプノズル

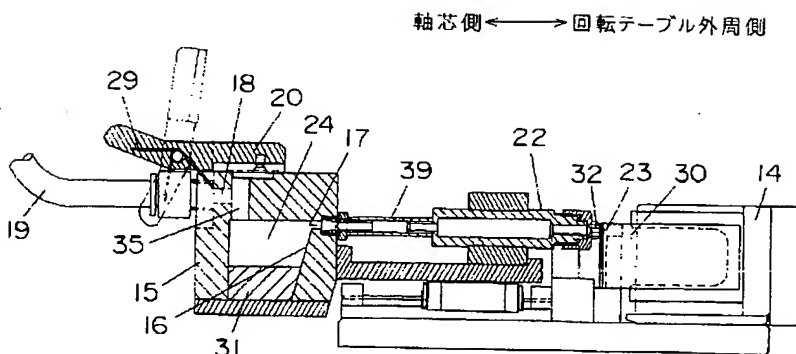
【図1】



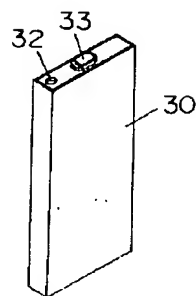
【図2】



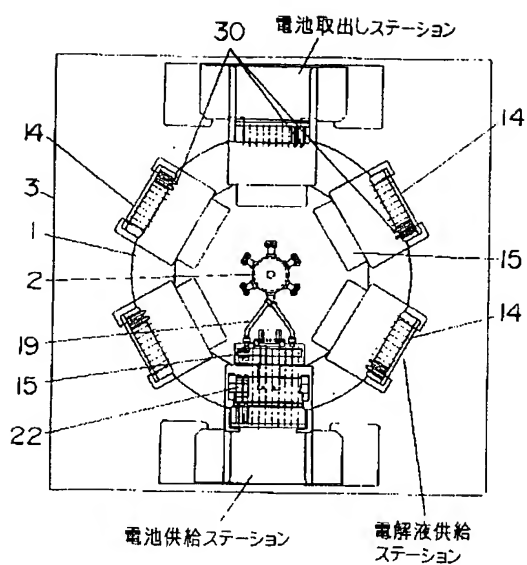
【図3】



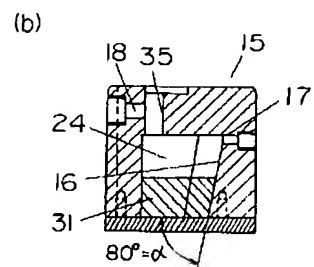
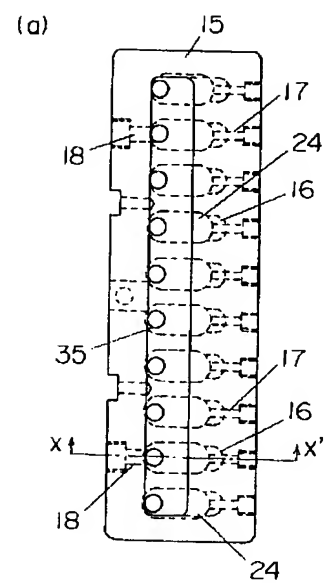
【図5】



【図4】



【図6】



【圖 7】

